

# Oral traditions in Malaysia

## A discussion of shamanism

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### ABSTRACT

The article discusses Malay oral traditions and emphasizes the shamanistic aspects of these traditions. Shamans often recite mantras in the execution of their role in society. The role of the shaman, their self proclaimed knowledge, shamans and their economic activities, black magic and healthcare in Malay society are discussed, as well as the shaman's role in Dayak ritual. Each aspect is discussed in combination with the mantra the shaman utters.

### KEYWORDS

Malaysia, oral traditions, shaman, mantra, black magic, Dayak ritual, water spirit.

### 1 INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Oral traditions are usually divided into two categories: verbal and non-verbal. Both were created by one person or a group of persons and involve narrative, offering, worship, ritual and such like and thus, oral traditions constitute an extremely extensive field. It is impossible to discuss all of it in one article and I will limit myself to shamanism. In the Malay world, shamans include *pawang* (specific kind of black or white magicians), or *dukun* and *bomoh* (spiritual counsellors, traditional healers, or medicine men).<sup>2</sup> A shaman is an expert in sorcery involving veneration and incantation by means of supernatural power.

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Dick van der Meij for his translation into English of my Malay article.

<sup>2</sup> [Http://www.oralchelation.com/taheebo/foottah/shaman.htm](http://www.oralchelation.com/taheebo/foottah/shaman.htm) (Haron Daud 2009).

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Shamans include ministers, physicians, and people who have the special gift and the supernatural knowledge to cure diseases or to fulfil people's desires.<sup>3</sup> Generally, for *dukun*, the world is divided into three distinct levels: the upper world (God), middle world (the shamanic place between the upper and the underworld), and the underworld which is the abode of ordinary people. The middle world is the most important as it connects the upper world with the underworld. Because of his extraordinary powers, a shaman is therefore an intermediary between ordinary people and God (Nevill 1987: 22). Moreover, according to the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, *pawang* and especially *pawang sedia* or *pawang asal* are distinguished people and the origin of all other creatures as portrayed in the following:

On the origins of *pawang*. It is said that the oldest *pawang* was in the old days when God was not yet called Allah [in the belief of the ancient Malay (present author)], the Prophet was not yet called Muhammad, sky, earth, Loh, Arasy, Kursi, sun, moon, star, cloud, heaven, hell and the world had not yet been created, jinn, humans, devils, and angels had not yet appeared and the only thing that was initially created was the Pawang Sedia. Pawang Sedia had a good look within himself and around him and from his observations he became clearly aware that everything mentioned above was as it is now and the *pawang* became passionate to see his outward appearance. Some *pawang* said that the sky was only as big as an umbrella and the sea as big as his eye, and that he created a bird who appeared before the Pawang Sedia who said to the bird, 'He bird, who are you?' The bird said, 'I don't know'. The Pawang Sedia said, 'I am Pawang Sedia, you are Pawang Asal and you will be the origin of the earth and all that is in it, and you will be the origin of the jinn and the people and you will be the origin of the devil and Satan, and from you will originate poison and its antidote, and you will be the origin of candles and incense, and from you will originate toasted rice, and you will be the origin of medicinal rice flour with *setawar* leaves, and you will be the origin of ambergris and fragrant eaglewood'. Thus spoke Pawang Sedia to Pawang Asal, 'You will replace me, do whatever you want, you are the Pawang Ganti and your title will be Tok Sheikh Belantarawan, you are assisted by Tun Tiarabih Gandai, whenever you want something, call my name'. And thus ends the story of Pawang Sedia and Pawang Asal and emerged the story of Pawang Ganti from the old days up to now. Whoever becomes a *pawang* is a Pawang Ganti because he replaces the work of Pawang Sedia and Pawang Asal. (Maxwell Malay MS 106: B1-6, see Haron Daud 2001: 101).

In Malay society, shamanism is an important social institution, and this was especially so in former times, because shamans played an important role as a mediators between humans and supernatural beings (Haron Daud 2001: 101). In addition, Harun Mat Piah (1989: 486) emphasizes that shamans have specific talents enabling them to recognize diseases and they know how to cure them. They have the supernatural knowledge of the agents that cause disease while they also have the personality and the spiritual power to counter these agents. In general, there are two kinds of shamans, *pawang*, and *dukun* or *tabib*. Both have their own specialities, in the words of the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*:

<sup>3</sup> [Http://deoxy.org/shaover.htm](http://deoxy.org/shaover.htm) (Haron Daud 2009).

These are the instructions for *pawang* and *tabib* and their requirements. In essence, the *pawang* has the supernatural knowledge of the origins of jinn and devils and he has the capacity to rule over them. Wallahhualam.

The essence of the supernatural knowledge of the *tabib* is that he has the knowledge of the origins of all diseases and the names and cures for all of them. Wallahhualam (Maxwell Malay MS 106: A1-2).

A shaman needs shamanistic supernatural knowledge. The easiest way to get this is by study or by becoming a student of one or more shamans. Usually he will be tested before he may be authorized to act as a shaman. There is also another way a shaman can obtain supernatural knowledge, which is when it is passed down to him from previous generations. These are hereditary shamans (*bomoh warisan*). The inheritance is usually passed down from next of kin. A *bomoh pusaka* usually has his own supernatural knowledge, which is not passed down to the next generations directly. The mantras he recites during his practices come up spontaneously and he is incapable of uttering them under normal circumstances. Thirdly, a person can become a shaman in a special way as if he is visited by a supernatural institution or through dreams. This usually happens to a person who is at his wits end, struck by disaster, or who has been sick for a long time. According to Hashim Awang (2006: 15), a shaman has four roles: healer of disease, advisor in things connected with black magic and sorcery, repellent of supernatural beings and devils, and lastly, he proposes and decides on interdictions in order to ease daily life.

In Malaysia, shamanism and cosmology are formed by a mixture of various elements of belief and religion such as animism, Hinduism-Buddhism, and Islam. People believe that the Malay, especially the Proto and Deutero Malays, originally believed in animism. This belief is still present in modern times among the Senoi, Semang, Negrito, Kenak, Dayak, and others. Their mystical views are replete with a variety of spirits connected with the forest, mountains, the sea, large trees, and hillocks and such things like. These spirits are an integral aspect of their lives and form a channel to realize their existence and their lives. Before the arrival of Islam approximately in the fourteenth century, peninsula Malays are said to have adhered to Hindu-Sivaism and subsequently to Hinayana Buddhism. The belief in the cosmos and the gods in these religions share with animism that they also believe that natural objects such as stones, hills, and the sun are endowed with power and spirit. This is an important aspect in Malay shamanism and mysticism. The Malay way of life and what they believed went through another change with the arrival of Islam, which brought the belief in the One and Only God (Allah), and with the Qur'an and hadith as guidelines in life. Slowly but surely, Hinduism and animism were set aside and were replaced by a belief system based on Islam. However, because animistic and Hindu elements were so firmly implanted in the Malay souls, Islam did not succeed in obliterating them completely. This is the reason these three elements form an integral part of Malay mysticism and shamanism. They colour their beliefs, values, and norms through fairytales that connect the real with the supernatural world and humans with the gods

(Mohamed Ghouse Nasuruddin 2006: 10). As before, present-day shamans continue to play an important role in Malay society.

## 2 SHAMANS AND THE KNOWLEDGE HOW TO PRESENT ONESELF

There are shamans who use their supernatural knowledge to enhance a person's good looks and to make him or her attractive. Among the things they use are *susuk*. There are various kinds of *susuk* dependent on what the wearer wants to achieve. If a person wants to look pretty and "not eaten up by old age" a shaman will put a diamond *susuk* in the skin of the client. For those who want to have a nice voice, he puts a *susuk* in the tongue. It is even said that *susuk* may enhance sexual prowess after a *susuk* is put in 'the thing'. In order to preserve bodily strength, the shaman inserts an aura into the person's body. I once met someone who told me that he had done this when he was still young and he still looked strong and in command although he was almost eighty years old. Shamans can also treat a person to strengthen his inner forces by reciting specific mantras and by using solid objects such as nails, coins, or hard fruit (see Illustration 1).



Illustration 1. A shaman with healing tool; Photograph by the author, 1989.

Someone's facial beauty may also be enhanced by using coconut oil over which a shaman has cast a spell. The oil is usually mixed with flowers to give it a nice smell (see mantra 1).

Hei minyak si minyak nyiur Aku tanak di kualiti besi Naik cahaya nur di muka aku Berkat aku memakai nur cahaya berahi Berahi sekalian umat Muhammad Pandang berahi kepada aku Dengan berkat kata Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah (Haron Daud 2004: 216)	He oil, coconut oil I cook you in an iron pot Enhance the radiance of my face Because I wear passionate radiance I am passionate for all of Muhammad's following Look at the passion that is on me Thanks to the words Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah
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## Mantra 1.

Apart from oil, powder may also be used to enhance facial radiance. During a Menora offering, especially women become besotted and go crazy for Tok Menora. Before the offering is made, Tok Menora reads mantras and uses "menora powder" over which a special spell has been cast in order to attract many spectators. The powder may be obtained from a Thai shaman.

The supernatural knowledge about how to carry oneself may also be obtained through practice. The shaman will teach the person who usually is required to pay a *pengeras* or certain items like hydrochloric acid. This practice is designed to make the practitioner look sweet or to make her/his voice sound nice (see Mantra 2 and 3).

Mantera pemanis	Sweetening mantra
Batang buruk batang beremban Di sini duduk di sana dendam Tegak aku nan manis Berjalan aku nan manis Bercakap aku nan manis Manis dipandang sekalian Benda yang bernyawa Berkat aku memakai Pemanis ular cintamani Berkat aku membaca Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah (Haron Daud 2004: 208)	Bad trunk, cross beam Sitting here, revenge over there Standing upright, I so sweet Walking, I so sweet Chatting, I so sweet Sweet to whoever sees me Animated object Thanks to the fact that I wear The sweetener of the cintamani snake of good fortune Thanks to the fact that I read Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah

## Mantra 2.

Mantera penyedap suara	Mantra to make one's voice pleasant
Bismi 'llahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahim Hei ayam tikahkan suara Aku bersuara, suara makrifat Aku memakai makrifat suara Rindu dendam sekalian makhluk Mendengar suara aku	Bismi 'llahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahim Hi, rooster enhance my voice I use my voice, the voice of wisdom I use the wisdom of my wise All creatures are besotted and longing When they hear my voice

Suara aku seperti suara Nabi Allah Daud	My voice is like that of Allah's Prophet Daud
Rupa aku seperti rupa Nabi Allah Yusof	I look like Allah's Prophet Yusof
Air yang deras lagikan tenang	Fast streaming water will ease down
Mendengar suara aku	Hearing my voice
Burung yang terbang lagikan berhenti	Birds in flight will halt
Mendengar suara aku	Upon hearing my voice
Ranting yang patah lagikan bertemu	Broken my twigs will be re-joined
Mendengar suara aku	Upon hearing my voice
Besi yang keras lagikan lembut	Hard iron will soften
Mendengar suara aku	Upon hearing my voice
Suara aku seperti Nabi Allah Daud	My voice is like that of Allah's Prophet Daud
Rupa aku seperti Nabi Allah Yusof	My face is like that of Allah's Prophet Yusof
Berkat memakai doa Nabi Allah Daud	Because I use Allah's Prophet Daud's prayer
Berkat doa	Thanks to the prayer
Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah	Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah
(Haron Daud 2001: 97)	

### Mantra 3.

In his effort to make himself 'perfect' so that he will be considered beautiful and loved by certain people, unconsciously the practitioner has applied his supernatural knowledge about how to keep a pelesit spirit. This supernatural knowledge is said to be rather too strong for this purpose, however, and when not taken care of properly, the spirit can disturb others, especially children. When the shaman catches the spirit and has placed it at the edge of a coconut shell and after he has shaved the hairy shell, the hair of the spirit's caretaker will fall off and he will become bold.

### 3 SHAMANS AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

In Malay society, traditional shamans play an important role in economic activities like piercing the soil to plant, catching fish, hunting animals, etcetera. A shaman is required, for instance, during the planting of rice from the moment of opening up the land and clearing the forest, and from sowing seeds up to harvest. In Negeri Sembilan, during what is known as a *berpuar*, an albino water buffalo is slaughtered upstream or in the village. Its blood is sacrificed to eradicate all bad luck, and disease, and to strengthen the spirit (Abdullah 1927: 311). For maritime economic activities or other activities concerned with water, a ritual is staged to pay tribute to the seashore or to serve the sea demons in order to safeguard the fishermen and to ensure that they catch many fish. Nowadays, these ceremonies are no longer enacted but this does not mean that shamans no longer have any role to play in these activities. Just to mention some examples, in 1989, shaman Tok Puteh from Kampung Sepagar, Pekan, Pahang (see Illustration 2), cast a spell over roasted rice to ensure that his son would catch a thousand kilo of catfish using only one

dragnet (Haron Daud 2009: 49). He uttered the following *Mantera menangkap ikan menggunakan hantu air* (Mantra 4).



Illustration 2. Tok Puteh and author; Photograph by the author, 1989.

Mantera menangkap ikan menggunakan hantu air	Mantra to catch fish by using evil water spirit
Assalamu’alaikum Hei Datuk Kepala Putih, mambang di laut Yang hidup di tali arus, Kau hidup di kuala beting Yang menjadi bukit Qaf, gunung segunung Makan kau dari Sarib ke Maghrib Hei Datuk Panglima Hitam, raja di laut Ini aku khabar pada engkau Kau kumpulkan segala ikan ke dalam pukatku Aku tak tahukan jahat Aku tahukan baik semata-mata pada engkau Berkat kata Lailahaillallah  (Haron Daud 2001: 152-153)	Assalamu’alaikum He Datuk Kepala Putih, spirit of the sea You who lives in the main water channel You who lives in the flowing current You who lives in the estuary and on the sandbanks You who has turned into the Qaf Hill, and into a mountain You who eat from Sarib to Maghrib He Datuk Panglima Hitam, King of the Sea I want to tell you this Gather all this fish in my net I know no evil I only know good things about you Thanks to the words Lailahaillallah

Mantra 4.

The roasted rice was subsequently scattered over the Pahang River close to Kampung Belimbing. The idea was that all the catfish from as far as four miles away would gather there and his son would be able to catch them. According to this shaman, the mantra can also be used to ask the water demon to summon a crocodile who has eaten a man. The crocodile is then asked to return the corps or the body parts that have not yet been eaten. The crocodile may even be summoned to fetch or to return objects, even as small as needles that have fallen into the water.

In another example from Kedah, there are people who can stay under water for more than an hour in order to catch fish and shrimps in the river. The person utters a mantra about the distance from which the water is not to reach him. According to Jaafar Awang Kechik, Pulau Tioman, Pahang, people can avoid accidents while at sea by invoking the help of the sea demons called Raja Bas and Raja Bus (Mantra 5).

Mantera hantu laut	Mantra of the evil sea spirits
Hei Raja Bus, Raja Bas Sultan Gila raja di laut Tolonglah aku Tujuh depa di kiri Tujuh depa di kanan Lapangkanlah perahuku. (Haron Daud 2001: 153)	He Raja Bus, Raja Bas Sultan Gila, ruler of the sea Help me Seven fathoms to the left Seven fathoms to the right Extend my boat.

#### Mantra 5.

The Iban people enact the Gawai Batu to ensure that the rice they plant will provide a huge harvest. The ceremony for the planting of the rice starts by a shaman or a *lumambang* shaman who recites the *Mantera menanam padi* (Mantra 6).

Mantera menanam padi	Mantra during the planting of the rice
Oooh haa...oooh haa...oooh ha Aku tu miao serijau manok banda Ukai ke miao ngapa miao saja Aku tu ka nanam padi pu, padi taun, padi benih, padi putih, padi birih Laban kami sehari tu ka belabuh benih Muai padi puja, padi linja dikumang indu pantang tiang pangkat tiga kami nyampi tu ngambi ke sida lang sama burung tai manang tuntung ngambi ke sida ia nemu sua raja beginda bujang angkat meh kita ari Panggau Libau Lendat Bebiau	Oooh haa...oooh haa...oooh haa... I pray while I wave a chicken I want to plant good rice Because today we want to sow the seeds Good seed the beautiful god We entreat the gods with incantations So that they will give us a good yield A proper harvest These are offering plates, five of them to worship We call on the gods To praise the god of the soil So that we may be pleased



<p>baka jila daun pisang  ngambi kita baka berimba nebang  kami miau padi  ngambi kami bulih padi ila asi  ngambi ke ia bulih maioh amai  aaah...tu piring anding, piring rima  kena kami miring padi kena  muja besai amai  aaah...ngabai ke sida semepat lat amat  baka ke di lap lung lapan  enda aku nemu kita wai lebu  ooh sapa ti nungah sapa ti ngesah  aku ah ke ngagau ke sengalang burung  ngagau sua raja tanah ngambai ke sida  kami bulih padi, bulih kuli,  bulih ringgit, bulih duit  ngambi ke padi kami bisi teresak bisi anak  ngambi ke kami bulih maioh amai  ini kita Petara Aki, Petara Ini,  Petara Apai, Petara Indai  datai meh kita sari tu  peda piring tuak, arak ke udah  di bantai ke kami.  (Banting ak Jugah, Sibul, Sarawak)</p>	<p>With a very good harvest  Please come, Petara Datuk, Petara  Nenek, Petara Ayah, Petara Ibu  Come and partake of our meal together  with us  With the palm wine, with the rice wine  we have set ready for you</p> <p>(Translated into Malay by Connie ak  Ganya, into English by Dick van der  Meij)</p>
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## Mantra 6.

In trading activities, a shaman usually provides the means to attract many customers to a shop. He may, for instance, recite Mantra 7 over oil or other goods and put these in the shop.

Mantera pelaris perniagaan	Mantra to ensure profitable trade
<p>Bismi 'llahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahim  Aku puja ilmuku Semar senyum  Senyumanku bagaikan Semar  Senyumanku kegembiraan  kedatanganku  Ngiling-ngiling sedih sepeninggalanku  Datang belas datang kasih  Orang sealam semesta ini  Semua kasih kepada aku  Kasih dengan kehendak Allah  Berkat doa  Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah.  (Haron Daud 2001: 159)</p>	<p>Bismi 'llahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahim  I worship my supernatural knowledge,  Semar smiles  My smile is like that of Semar  My smile is my pleasure of my arrival  sadly pondering after my departure  Compassion and love arrive  People from all over the world  Will all love me  Love me as Allah desires  Thanks to the prayer  Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah.</p>

## Mantra 7.

Usually Hindus and Chinese call on shamans to help boost their trade. Almost all of their shops have effigies they worship daily. Chinese factory owners may even bring in and employ foreign shamans to cast a spell and to decide on the exact spot for the entrepreneur’s desk and for those of his employees. This usually has connections with *fang sui*, originally known as *hum yue* – the heavenly and earthly paths (Croxon 2003: 102).

4 SHAMANS AND BLACK MAGIC

Shamans and others resort to black magic when they need something evil done or when they have their own interests in mind. This includes the supernatural knowledge a shaman needs to become invisible in order to perpetrate evil acts like theft and burglary. Black magic is also used to intoxicate or hypnotize a person or a certain party. This is done by blowing or reciting mantras over matter to be scattered over or placed on a person or his house. The victim will fall asleep and by doing so allows the practitioner to steal his belongings or he is incapacitated so that he cannot move or, contrarily, will do whatever the practitioner wants him to do like handing over his money or his golden jewellery he is wearing or even to bring the practitioner to his house where he will hand over his valuables to him there.

Many shamans use their supernatural knowledge to inflict pain and to cause disease, and even to cause the victim to die. They use mixtures of poison and lethal mixtures of glass powder, the hairs of hairy caterpillars, or fine bamboo hairs and they recite a specific mantra over them. They also use mixtures of air using the powers of jinns and devils (Mantra 8).

Mantera membuat santau angin	Mantra to create santau angin
Hei sang bayu angin datang dari langit Langit hitam tujuh lapis Bawalah barang pada si anu Tujuku tembus bukit yang tujuh Melangkau hati melangkau jasad Terkujur si anu seluruh badan Kaku seluruh anggota tubuh Hitam darah menitik ke bumi Ku seru dengan nama Katibin Jika tak kaku tubuh si anu Bisa menular di dalam jantung Bisa menular di dalam hati Berkat aku berilmu Berkat doa tok guru.  (Haron Daud 2001: 143-144)	Hey you, wind that comes down from the sky The seven layers of the black sky Bring this to so and so My aim is to go through the seven hills And to pass over the heart to pass over the body And over the whole body of so and so His whole body will become rigid His blood will become black and will drop to the earth I cry out the name Katibin If so and so’s body will not become rigid The poison spread to his heart The poison spread to his liver Thanks to my supernatural knowledge Thanks to the prayers of the teacher.

Mantra 8.

A physical mixture needs to be put into the food or the drink of the victim

whereas a windy mixture only needs to be accompanied by the right intention and may be blown from afar. The victim will throw up blood and if not treated in time, he or she will die.

Another form of black magic is when a shaman uses the oil of the jaw or of a murdered person. He will extract the oil from each of a murdered person's body parts, especially from the jaw. People believe that the more black magic the dead person practiced, the more "powerful" the oil will be (Mantra 9).

Mantera mengambil minyak dagu	Mantra to extract oil from the jaw
Hei yang kelu jasadmu Yang kaku jiwamu Minta izin, aku nak seru rohmu Salbimu tak hancur Nak panggil semangatmu Merejap dalam minyak Minyak bernama mati berdarah Berkat feelmu jadilah Segala suruh mu ikut Segala tuju mu jadi Senyawa feel Perasap aku akan rohmu Mu dengar kataku Jamu kemenyan makanlah khadam Berkat sidi namamu (Junus) Berkat sidi pada bapamu (Jusoh) Berkat sidi pada datukmu (Derani) Berkat sidi pada ibumu (Jenab) Senyawa minyak feel. (Haron Daud 2001: 144-145)	He you speechless body Whose soul is stiff I ask your permission to invigorate your spirit Your coccyx ( <i>salbi</i> ) will be not destroyed call your ardour And leak it into the oil The oil is called death by bleeding Thanks to your act it will succeed All you order will be done All your aims will come true <i>Senyawa</i> act I'm smoke your spirit Your listen to my words incense offering to the slave for eat Thanks to you your name (Junus) Thanks to your father (Jusoh) Thanks to your grandfather (Derani) Thanks to your mother (Jenab) Oil extract act.

#### Mantra 9.

This oil may be put directly on the victim or may be put in his food, swept under his chair, or buried under his house. The victim will become extremely ill, and frightening creatures will visit him and he will feel hot as if he is being burned. Others may even become crazy or will look funny or behave strangely. There are also black magic shamans who will hit their victim with the number seven such as seven eggs, seven lemons, seven needles, seven nails, seven mirrors, etc. People believe that the shaman can release the seven eggs and seven lemons from his own house. They will fly to the victim while releasing a shrill sound. The moment they reach their victim, they will attack him and the victim will fall ill or die. In various regions in Sabah, there are black practices that put climbing perches, pineapples, and prickly rattan into the stomach of the victim. Other shamans remove the victim's genitals and put them on his forehead or any other place on his body. Shamans or others who resort to this kind of practices are required to acknowledge themselves as being one day older than God.

## 5 SHAMANS AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

One important function of a shaman is to cure diseases. Like Chinese medicine that claims to be able to cure diseases doctors with all their technology cannot (Hendry Lu Chow 2003: 6), also Malay shamans can cure chronic diseases, especially those caused by supernatural beings and mental wind. Madness is one of the diseases that are hard to cure. Shaman Musa Awang says that there are 199 kinds of madness (*gila*) in traditional medicine but that only four of them are visible, those of the skin, the tendons, the blood, and the liver. Madness can be caused by disturbances from supernatural beings, be hereditary, the result of black magic, or the result of the application of specific supernatural knowledge. A shaman has to be certain of the exact nature of the madness before he can cure it by giving the patient an antidote, by blowing Quranic verses over him, or by mantra recitation (see Mantra 10).

Mantera memulihkan penyakit gila	Mantra to cure madness
Bismi 'Ilahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahiim	Bismi 'Ilahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahiim
Ya Allah, ya Allah	Ya Allah, ya Allah
Ya Rasul, ya Rasul	Ya Rasul, ya Rasul
Sepuluh penyakit datang	Ten diseases arrive
Sepuluh penyakit pergi	Ten diseases depart
Sepuluh gila datang	Ten kinds of madness arrive
Sepuluh gila pergi	Ten kinds of madness depart
Jikalau engkau tidak pergi	When you do not go away
Aku rendam engkau tujuh kali	I will immerse you seven times
Bukan aku yang menawar gila	It is not I who cures madness
Allah yang menawar gila	It is Allah who cures madness
Bukan aku yang menawar gila	It is not I who cures madness
Nabi Muhammad yang menawar gila	It is the Prophet Muhammad who cures madness
Bukan aku yang menawar gila	It is not I who cures madness
Siti Fatimah yang menawar gila	It is Siti Fatimah who cures madness
Bukan aku yang menawar gila	It is not I who cures madness
Nabi Adam yang menawar gila	It is the Prophet Adam who cures madness
Bukan aku yang menawar gila	It is not I who cures madness
Siti Hawa yang menawar gila	It is Siti Hawa who cures madness
Bukan aku yang menawar gila	It is not I who cures madness
Malaikat empat puluh empat yang menawar gila berkat doa	There are forty-four angels who cure madness
Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah.	Thanks to the prayer Lailahaillallah Muhammadar Rasulullah.
(Musa Awang, Kota Bharu, Kelantan)	

Mantra 10.

Another example of the involvement of shamans in healthcare is Main Pateri. This ceremony is intended to cure diseases that are usually caused by supernatural beings or by mental wind inherited in the family. Main Pateri is said only to exist in Kelantan in the Besut Region, in Terengganu, and in Southern Thailand. It is said to originate from Puteri Saadung, a legendary

character from Kelantan. She was so beautiful that she was seized by the King of Siam. However, she was liberated after she succeeded in curing a rare disease the King suffered from. After her return to Kelantan, she was very distressed because her husband, Raja Abdullah, had married another woman. Her younger brother, Raja Ahmad, played the *rebab* to soothe her and after she had regained herself, she used this to cure diseases.

The members of a Main Pateri group call in two shamans called Tok Pateri and Tok Minduk. They are assisted by five or seven gamelan players. Tok Pateri is an important figure because he acts as shaman to cure the sick person and at the same time acts as the mediator between the sick person, and Tok Minduk and the spectators. Main Pateri is staged at night after Isyak prayers and lasts until the wee hours of the morning. The ritual takes place in the house of the patient or in a temporary pavilion close to his house and lasts one, three, or seven nights. The number of nights depends on the patient's disease. For an offering that lasts more than one night, the first night is to decide on the nature of the disease, the second and other nights to cure the patient (see Illustrations 3 and 4). If the Main Pateri includes the reception of guests, the last night lasts undisturbed until sunrise and is followed by a *mengantar balai* ceremony. In general, a Main Pateri ritual has four stages (Haron Daud 1993: 4-8).

#### *The first stage*

The first stage consists of *Buka Panggung*. It is enacted by the shaman together with Tok Pateri or Tok Minduk when all the members of the congregation have taken their seats. The shaman recites some mantras to revive the Guru Asal connected with the Main Pateri and to ask him to protect the members who enact the Main Pateri ritual. To do so, the shaman waves incense over a dish of yellow cooked rice and a boiled egg, a roll of untreated thread and a shilling and 25 cents while he utters mantras. One round tray of offerings is prepared consisting of yellow sticky rice, roasted chicken, fried egg, flour, water, cigarettes, a brush, and 25 cents. The shaman, among others, invokes Allah, the Prophet, the angels, and he admonishes the spirits not to disturb the Main Pateri group, the patient, or the spectators for which the spirits are given offerings after they have been waved over by incense. This stage ends with the traditional healer (*dukun*) reciting the *Buka Panggung* mantra in order to invoke the Dalang Asal and Semar to protect all the entertainment and to allow the assortment of musical instruments to sound their melodious tones (see Mantra 11).

Mantera mengangkat nasi guru	Mantera to lift the rice for "guru"
Assalamu 'alaikum Hei Syeikh Abdul Qadir Jailani Syeikh tawaf di Tanah Mekah Syeikh berpijak di tanah Hindi Kerana aku nak kirimlah	Assalamu 'alaikum He Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani Sheikh of the circumambulation around the Kaabah in Mecca Sheikh who is seated in Hindi

<p> Minduk seorang, Pateri satu  Panjak tujuh, pengantin lima  Nak minta guru jaga  Di atas jadi payung dewa  Jaga di kiri kanan pagar sawa  Serkup raja, semak dewa  Nak minta jaga  Jangan beri rosak binasa  Minduk seorang, Pateri satu  Panjak tujuh pengantin lima  Atas balai di halaman balai  Pada malam ni pada waktu ni  Tiga salam hamba nak mintalah  menyampai  Daripada nenek dengan kerana sebab  Guru asal nenek mula  Guru tujuh duabelas jadi  Satu guru nenek Ajiajal  Dua guru nenek Alahama  Tiga sidi Ikmal Hakim  Empat baginda Norcahaya  Lima datuk Berembun Sakti  Enam Aplā  Tujuh nenek Bergading Putih  Bertekak eram bersidi sakti  Bertulang tunggal, berlidah fasih  Bulu roma songsang, berdarah putih  Air liur masin  Barang minta barang jadi  Barang kehendak barang boleh.  Nak minta guru pandang tilik,  Nak minta selamat nikmat,  sempurna rakna  Jangan beri jin tumpang berteduh  Jangan beri iblis tumpang bergantung  Pada malam ni ketika ni. </p> <p> (Musa Awang 1993, Kota Bharu,  Kelantan) </p>	<p> Because I want to send  One Minduk, one Pateri  Seven gamelan players, five grooms  I want to ask Guru to safeguard  Above as an umbrella of the gods  To guard left and right of the fence  around the rice field  To cover the king, the uterine brother  of the gods  I ask you to guard  And not to allow things to become  completely destroyed  One Minduk, one Pateri  Seven gamelan players, five grooms  On the pavilion on the grounds of the  pavilion  At night and at that time  I would like to ask you to deliver three  greetings  From grandfather with the following  reason  You are the origin of grandfather  Seven gurus become twelve  The first guru is grandfather Ajiajal  The second guru is grandfather  Alahama  The third is sidi Ikmal Hakim  The fourth is his Majesty Norcahaya  The fifth is datuk Berembun Sakti  The sixth is Aplā  The seventh is grandfather Bergading Putih  Bend gullet supernatural efficacious  With one bone and a fluent tongue  Fine body hair with opposite each other  White blood, effective speech  What ever is asked is granted  Whatever is desired is allowed  Wants guru to predict  Want of all save and complete  Don't give the iblis hanging there  At that night, at that time. </p>
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Mantra 11.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Recorded at the house of Musa Awang, Kg, Che Latif, Kota Bharu Kelantan on 20 March 1993.



Illustration 3. Houseboat with offerings; Photograph by the author.



Illustration 4. The small boat with offerings; Photograph by the author.

*The second stage*

During the second stage, the exact nature of the disease is established. It starts with the *Lagu Bertabik*. Tok Minduk starts it by playing the *rebab*, and the gamelan players follow him, each playing his own instrument. Simultaneously, Tok Minduk and Tok Pateri sing the *Lagu Bertabik*. Meanwhile, Tok Pateri tries to bring himself into a state of oblivion. When the song has ended, he states that he has become a shaman and he starts a dialogue with Tok Minduk in order to investigate the disease. Tok Pateri takes a plate of roasted rice and a plate of yellow rice, over which he casts a spell. He takes a bit of the roasted rice and puts it on a pillow. He repeats this three times. Each group gets the appropriate amount of roasted rice. For instance, the first group (oldest) consists of five couples, the second (middle) consists of eight couples, and the third group (youngest) consists of eleven couples. Each group is calculated to four, representing earth, water, fire, and wind, thus group one (earth), group two (wind), and group three (fire). Each element reflects the nature and the stage of the disease of the patient.

*The third stage*

The patient is cured during the third stage. After the nature of the disease has been established, Tok Pateri has a clear picture of the disease. Tok Minduk starts by playing the *rebab* followed by the other gamelan players. Tok Pateri, acting as a shaman, approaches the patient, recites a mantra to cure him and in a state of ecstasy, he becomes an old man and returns to Tok Minduk. In a dialogue among them, they connect the patient with the disease and subsequently Tok Pateri invokes the patient's wind. This phase lasts the longest because occasionally the shaman has to invoke a number of different winds before he has found those that match those of the patient. Usually, the relevant winds are the Angin Dewa Muda, Angin Dewa Pecil, Angin Bidan, Angin Hala, and Angin Pendekar.

After the wind of the patient has been revived, he will come round and display certain behaviour. A patient who has been exposed to *Angin Hala* will behave like a tiger. He will attack the offerings and eat them with his mouth without using his hands. A patient with *Angin Pendekar* will wake up performing a war dance even after having been bedridden for almost a year. When a patient has responded, 'Tok Pateri's task is made easier because he no longer needs to guide him in his effort to cure him. It is made even more easy when a close relative of the patient loses consciousness and jumps onto the centre of the platform. He will explain all the inns and outs of the disease and its cure. Usually, the unconscious person proposes some conditions. After all conditions have been met, he will cooperate with *Angin Dewa Muda* and the patient will be dressed in royal attire and the scene changes to a Mak Yong performance which will last until the patient is satisfied or when 'his passions have been released'. Sometimes a ritual may last as long as three to seven nights.



*The fourth stage*

Fourthly, the closing of the ritual. A Main Pateri ritual ends when the patient is cured – and the supernatural power that caused his disturbance has been chased away – or when those involved in the session think it has been enough. In case of a Main Pateri Berjamu, the closing will be at the night of the last day by making propitiatory offerings. A pavilion in the form of a multi-storied house with usually three or seven floors is erected from sago or *nipah* thatch. Each level is provided with offerings to entertain specific evil spirits. The lowest level is provided with bananas, food prepared from flour such as *karas* cookies, beef, water buffalo meat, and chicken for the evil spirits that emerge from the body of the patient. The middle level is provided with raw and boiled eggs, raw and cooked shellfish (*remis* and *lokan*), chicken blood, and palm wine for unspecified bad spirits. The upper level is provided with *baulu*, *gine* and *karas* cookies for the gods (Amran Kasimin 2006: 88). When no pavilion is erected, the offerings are put in an isolated spot and in a nest made of bamboo for young coconut and some of the other offerings. The event ends with the shaman reciting a mantra. This kind of shamanism is still practiced all over Kelantan, especially to cure mental diseases or those of the wind, and disturbances caused by supernatural beings.

## 6 SHAMANISM AT DAYAK RITUALS

The Dayaks in Sarawak consist of many tribes such as the Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Penan, and Orang Ulu most of whom are Christians but who also often are still pagan. They continue to strongly believe in invisible beings and supernatural powers. Therefore, the Iban organize all kinds of celebrations (*gawai*) such as Gawai Kenyalang, Gawai Antu, Gawai Batu, and Gawai Pakutiang while the Bidayuh enact their Gawai Padi or Tanah, all of them requiring the role of a shaman known as a *lumambang* to mediate with invisible beings, spirits, and supernatural powers. I will only discuss one Gawai Padi here, which was enacted by the Bidayuh in Kampung Gerogok, Bau, on 1 June 2003 (see Illustrations 5 and 6). The celebration, which is actually a ritual, started with the erection of a platform and the division of the place into three parts. One part was for the musical instruments including some gongs, a *gendang*, and a *kenong*. One part was for the ceiling to which were attached the fangs and the tail of a pig as well as food for the offering including palm wine and pork picked in brine. On the last part, they built a cradle for the *ahli bulih* (group of chosen women) where they could swing and sing their *bulih* songs. In front of the committee, a small cabin with offerings was made as a place for the spirits to meditate and on the second day, the leg of a pig that was killed the night before was hung there. The ritual was opened and enacted by the chairman of the shamans and some retainers and started at midnight of June 1. The chairman opened the ceremony by reciting a mantra to call the evil spirits so that they would descend to partake of the meals that were set ready for them so that they would not feel disturbed.



Illustration 5. The Bidayuh people whom call the paddy spirit; Photograph by the author, 2003.



Illustration 6. The paddy spirits in the baskets; Photograph by the author, 2003.

The ritual lasted quite long and was accompanied by music played on the instruments mentioned above. The next morning the participants walked in procession to the river to enact the ritual to call the rice spirits. They believed that the rice spirits descent from the hill following the course of the river. The shaman recited various mantras to call them while he was accompanied by the gong and by some women who were shaking water in a bowl. The rice spirits arrived with some balls of hair and some unhusked rice, which they put into the water in the bowl. The moment the spirits arrived, the *gong* and *gendang* stopped playing and the women who shook the water caught the spirits and each put one in their respective bags to take them home. They urgently needed to protect the rice spirits in order to ensure a yearly good rice harvest.

## 7 CLOSING REMARKS

The discussion above reveals that oral shamanistic traditions still lives on and are used in Malay society for beneficial as well as for evil ends. Shamanistic practices are a mixture of animist and Islamic elements. It clearly shows us Allah in His capacity of the All Benevolent who gives whatever a person desires even if it is to cause disease or the death of a person, and that His characteristic of All Loving benefits those who are blessed. In my opinion, it would be logical if practices of white shamanism were to be continued, especially to cure diseases, particularly those caused by supernatural beings, those of the nervous system, and for broken bones all of which modern medicine cannot cure.

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